



State of Washington

## **DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Mailing Address: 600 Capitol Way N - Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 - (360) 902-2200, TDD (360) 902-2207  
Main Office location: Natural Resources Building - 1111 Washington Street SE - Olympia, WA

### **REVISED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (DNS)**

**Name of Proposal:** CHERRY VALLEY DRAINAGE WORK TO PROVIDE FISH PASSAGE AND PREVENT POST FLOOD ENTRAPMENT OF FISHES AND MAINTAIN ACCESS

**Description of Proposal:**

This project is intended to address adverse floodwater impacts by improving capacity for drainage and facilitating fish passage out of this specific site.

This project will be performed in two phases. Phase 1 includes the correction of 22 identified water drainage constrictions which also function as fish passage barriers within a series of interconnected agricultural ditches at the Cherry Valley Wildlife Unit. These identified barriers, which impede water drainage and fish passage through the series of ditches, tributary channels and ponds, will be corrected by several methods. 1) Undersized and collapsed culverts will be replaced with larger culverts, vehicular bridges or pedestrian bridges. 2) Ditches blocked by sediment and debris will be cleaned to restore function. This includes one ditch blocked by an earthen dam which will be removed to restore ditch connection and function. One additional culvert will be removed and the location permanently filled because this site does not provide any drainage benefit. Phase 1 activities will result in a net cut of 3577.4 cubic yards of material from within existing ditches.

Phase 2 activities will include hydraulically connecting 7 isolated man-made ponds to the existing drainage system in Cherry Valley to facilitate fish passage and drainage, especially during periods following high water events. These seven isolated ponds not only impound water but currently strand fish that enter during flooding events. Stranded fish are exposed to lethal temperatures, lethal dissolved oxygen levels, and predation. Phase 2 activities (besides improving drainage) will allow fish to escape this area and avoid warmer and drier periods that might prove lethal to juvenile salmonids. Ponds will be connected to the existing drainage system by excavating short channels to connect four adjacent ponds in a series to the ditch, and also excavating short channels to connect three single ponds to existing ditches. One culvert will be added in a newly created ditch to maintain tractor access to agricultural land. Phase 2 activities will result in a net cut of 1349.16 cubic yards of material from within the work area.

### **Related but Independent Project by Wild Fish Conservancy to Restore Waterwheel Creek**

**This project will receive separate environmental review as it has different purpose, funding and permitting. The two projects are related and located on Waterwheel Creek and its tributaries but both can stand alone.**

The Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) proposed Waterwheel Creek Restoration Project is located within the Cherry Valley Wildlife Area (CVWA) owned by the Washington State Department of Fisheries and Wildlife (WDFW). The project is designed to increase the quality and quantity of fish habitat (migration and rearing habitat for coho and Chinook salmon, cutthroat and

rainbow/steelhead trout, and other native fishes known and presumed to reside in Cherry Valley) and improve salmon access to upstream spawning habitat in Waterwheel Creek. To the extent possible given existing constraints, WFC will increase the complexity and diversity of instream habitats and restore the natural fluvial processes that create and maintain them. In doing so, WFC will also improve the water quality in CVWA, which is currently compromised to the point of causing near-annual fish kills. As designed, the project will also maintain or improve the conveyance of off-CVWA floodwaters, especially in the spring when Drainage District #7 (DD7) drainage demands are greatest. The project is the outcome of a NMFS- administered cooperative compliance process - attended by WFC, WDFW, and DD7 - designed to address documented DD7 'take' of ESA-listed Puget Sound chinook salmon.

Specifically, the project involves excavating a new 4,600-foot long naturalized stream channel and floodplain for Waterwheel Creek and abandoning and filling three existing agricultural drainage ditches (Laterals B, C, and D). Spoils from the excavated floodplain will be used to fill the existing drainage ditches, to fortify the landward side of the mainstem Cherry Creek levee, and to amend the road that currently exists along the mainstem levee improving access to an existing pump station. The new channel and associated revegetated riparian corridor covers an area of approximately 21-acres. The project also includes placing woody debris within the stream channel to improve fish habitat. Abandoning the drainage ditches and creating one larger, naturalized stream channel will improve water quality and dramatically increase the amount of habitat available to fish. The new channel alignment will mimic the sinuosity and condition of the likely historical conditions. Construction is anticipated to begin summer 2012.

WDFW will be lead agency for the Waterwheel Creek Restoration Project and will issue the environmental review document for that project when it is available. It will be listed as #11-097 on WDFW's SEPA Web Site: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa\\_comment\\_docs.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html)

**Proponent/Applicant:**

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**Location of Proposal Cherry Valley Unit of WDFW Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:**

Washington, King County; Section 7, Township 26 North, Range 7 East WM

**Lead Agency:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

WDFW has determined that this proposal will likely not have a significant adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, state law<sup>1</sup> does not require an environmental impact statement (EIS). WDFW made this determination of nonsignificance (DNS) after we reviewed the environmental checklist and other information on file with us.

We issued this DNS according to state rules.<sup>2</sup> We will **not act on this proposal for 14 days** from the date we issued the DNS. Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on this proposal or DNS. We must receive your comments within 14 days of the date of this letter. This means we must receive your comments by **December 16, 2011**

**Method of Comment:**

The following procedures shall govern the method to comment on agency SEPA proposals. Comments received through these procedures are part of the official SEPA record for this proposal.

You can submit your comments any one of the following ways:

- Email to [SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:SEPAdesk2@dfw.wa.gov)
- Online at the WDFW SEPA website comment link at: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/>
- Fax to (360) 902-2946;
- Mail to the address below.

**Responsible Official:** Bob Zeigler

**Position/Title:** SEPA/NEPA Coordinator, WDFW Regulatory Services Section

**Address:** 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, WA 98501-1091

After the comment period closes, applicants may view the updated status of this proposal on the WDFW SEPA website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/> Once the status is posted as final, applicants and permittees may take action on the proposal. When a proposal is modified or withdrawn, notice will be given in accordance with state law.<sup>1</sup>

If you have questions about this DNS or the details of the proposal, contact Bob Zeigler at the address, e-mail, or fax number above; you can also call him at (360) 902-2578.

**DATE OF ISSUE:** December 1, 2011

**SIGNATURE:**



Footnotes

1. RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)
2. WAC 197-11-340(2).

SEPA Log Number: 11 -096. dns